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REVIEW OF NEW PUBLICATIONS.

Fasciculus the 2d of the Belfast Literary Society, on the Linen and Hempen Manufacture, by Doctor Stephenson. Belfast, Smyth and Lyons, 1808.

Concluded from vol. 1. p. 377.

IT was our intention to have resumed our notice of this most valuable article in our last Number, but we postponed it, from a wish to pay it the particular attention, that so very important a subject demands. Our general remarks shall still be reserved for another occasion; in the mean time we lay before our readers that portion of the treatise, which will most interest them at the present moment, the observations of Doctor Stephenson on the quality and culture of flax:

"Most of our flax-seed is imported from Riga, the Low Countries, and America. The farmers who are accustomed to sow Riga, especially if they intend to preserve the seed, prefer it, because it produces the greatest quantity. Although the casks in which it is exported are new, they are often badly finished, and the seed sometimes damaged, and often too long kept. Memel seed has been imported into this Province; it produces short flax and is now generally despised.

"The Dutch is a large, dark coloured seed, some grains of it are nearly black, and flat, and shrivelled, like unripe seed hastily dried, yet it sells as high as Riga seed, and higher than American. It cannot be safely kept through the winter, so as to be sown the following spring. The old, close, damp wine hogsheads in which it is exported, were supposed to be the cause of this evil. The American casks are made of new, dry, well-seasoned oak, and readily admit air. Our merchants believing this theory well founded, changed it from Dutch into American casks, and stored it on well-aired, dry lofts, without any good effect. Probably the damp air of the Low Countries, and unripe seed are the causes.

"The American seed is smaller and rounder than the Dutch, the colour lighter, the skin smoother. The preference of the Dutch seed is contrary to our experience of the advantage of changing the seed of grain to a kind of soil different from that in which it was produced. The soil of America differs more from the soil of Ireland than the soil of the Low Countries, yet the Dutch seed is preferred to the American, from a supposition that it produces larger and longer stalks, and a greater quantity of flax.

"The annual importation of flax-seed from each country into the ports of this kingdom is published in the yearly Transactions of the Linen Board.

"The annual average sale of flax-seed in Belfast, 5,000 hogsheads; in Newry, 9,000; in Londonderry, 11,000, amounting to 25,000 hogsheads. The importations annually exceed the sales by several thousand hogsheads.

"Riga and Dutch seeds are sold at the same rate by the wholesale merchants; New-york, Philadelphia and Boston, at the same rate; New-york and Boston are preferred by farmers to Philadelphia.

In 1805	Dutch seed sold for..	£7	19	3
	American,.....	6	16	6
In 1806,	Dutch,.....	7	19	3
	American,.....	4	11	0
In 1807,	Dutch,.....	7	7	10
	American,.....	4	5	0
In 1808,	Dutch, old.....	10	4	9
	American, new.....	9	2	0

To complete this table we here add the importations and prices this season, from the 1st January, till 26th April.

Dutch, 107 hogsheads, price when landed, 25 to 30 guineas, all sold.—Riga, 3064½ hogsheads, at 30 guineas when landed; 13 guineas, 26th April.—English, 617 hogsheads, at 20 guineas when landed; 11 to 13 guineas, 26th April.—Sicilian, 694.—Canada, 376½ hogsheads, at 12 guineas when landed; 8 guineas, 26th April.—Archangel, 289½ hogsheads, at 12 guineas when landed; 8 guineas 26th April.—total 5148½ hogsheads, from the 1st January till the 26th April, 1809. Some American vessels are daily expected.

Seed found on hand in Belfast, before the 1st of January last, 11 hogs-

heads Dutch; 198 American; 281 barrels Riga. The Sicilian is a very large seed, we learn that it is cultivated for the seed only for its oil, not for the fibrous texture of the flax.

"No new Dutch seed at market this season (1808) a supposed scarcity, and a demand from forestallers occassioned the American seed to be sold in March, 1808, at £11 7 6, some at £14 5 9; in May, the same year, it was sold for £7 7 10½. The great demands, the high prices, the danger and dissappointments induced the Trustees to encourage the farmers of this country to save and sow their own seed. The greatest quantities were raised when premiums were distributed by the acre, and itinerant men sent to inspect the crops.

"Rippling, drawing the bolls from the stalk with an iron comb, was not neglected in the early stages of the linen manufacture, because they spoil the water in which the flax is steeped, and are very troublesome in the grassing and breaking; in this operation the fibrous texture is sometimes injured by the comb; this is prevented by laying the flax in handfuls across each other, or binding it up in small sheaves, and letting it continue a few days in the form of stooks; the cortical part will then be firm, and remain unmjured by the comb.

"In warm and early countries, the rippled bolls may be dried and the seed preserved for sowing; but, the weather of our autumns is so uncertain that we seldom succeed in this practice; when we attempt to dry them on a floor, the heat they acquire destroys the principle of vegetation; the seed is then only fit for the oil mill.

"The farmers most successful in saving seed, pull the flax when fully ripe; if the weather is dry they lay it in handfuls a few days on the ground, six handfuls across each other, in each place; then bind it up in sheaves, stook it till dry, build it on hovels or stands, and thresh it off in the April following. If the flax is early ripe, it is threshed without stacking, and immediately watered, grassed and dressed. The seed is easily separated from the husks by passing it through a common grist mill; care should be taken to keep the stones at such a distance as to break the bolls without injuring the seed.

"The late Sir John Blackwood, of Ballyleedy published a Treatise upon Winter Flax; he sowed the seed in autumn with success, and was imitated by many farmers, but with uncertain profit, because severe frosts heaved the tender plants out of the ground and destroyed them. A light roller drawn over it, might have restored it to the soil, and prevented the loss. If this method would succeed, the crop would be early, and the seed easily saved.

"When flax is nearly ripe, a disease called firing, often attacks it. It appears on the bark like mildew upon the stalks of wheat, and like parasitical plants, injures the stem which supports it. This fungus does not so much injure the seed as the fibres of the flax. It adheres so closely to the rind, as to elude the operations of watering, scutching, hackling, spinning, boiling, weaving, and often of the old method of bleaching; when it appears in the form of black specks on half-bleached Linen, it is called *sprit*. When this disease attacks the standing flax, immediate pulling is the only remedy yet discovered; most of it may be removed by scraping and brushing at the time of hackling, or before hackling, by an antient instrument, too little in use, the *clore*; it resembles curling tongs upon a large scale; the cylindrical side, the tongue, is of wood, the concave side of iron, the sharp edges of which scrape the flax drawn between it and the tongue. The new method of bleaching removes every appearance of sprit.

"When flax stands till the seed is ripe, the fibres are course and not easily divided by the dresser. It does not sell for so much by the stone as finer flax, but the quantity is greater, and the produce of an acre sells for more than if it were fine. The farmers in this province, who have practised the culture of ground for Flax, can testify, that this kind of husbandry is as profitable as any other, even suppose the seed badly saved, and fit only for the oil mill.

"The flax leaves the land in a

good state for wheat; clover-seed is sown with great advantage with the flax-seed, because the flax is early off the ground, and the land is made looser and the clover moulded by pulling the flax. If the clover is luxuriant, the ground will be left in excellent condition for wheat or flax, if sowed with one furrow on the clover lay.

"Potatoes, flax, clover, or wheat, is a very proper course of crops upon clay ground; oats in place of wheat on light land.

"Flax-seed bright in colour, heavy, free from seeds of weeds, and which when bruised, appears fresh, tastes sweet, and not fusty, should be chosen.

"This useful plant thrives in different soils and climates, with various modes of cultivation; it delights most in a deep open loam, kept some years in pasture; when plowed only once, it will be free of weeds, and produce the strongest and best flax. Land which is very free and open, may be sown after potatoes with harrowing only; if it is inclined to clay, it should be plowed and well harrowed before sowing; ground that has produced a good crop after potatoes, will produce good flax, if only once plowed and harrowed. The inhabitants of the Braid get good crops of flax from poor land, without manure, if plowed and harrowed three or four times. Flax should not be sown on rank stiff clay, nor on dry gravel, nor in small fields surrounded with trees or high hedges; these, by keeping it wet, cause it to lodge, and the drops from the trees prevent it arriving at maturity.

"Writers on the cultivation of this plant direct, that all flax-ground should be laid flat, because if it is in ridge and furrow, it will produce stalks unequal in length; this plan is very proper where the ground is deep and dry. If thin wet ground be laid flat, it will produce little in a rainy season; the cultivators of such must yield to necessity, and sow their seed upon the land laid up in ridges; the flax on the ridge must be first pulled, and that in the furrow sometime after. The long and short stalks should be kept separate, else the short may be lost in dressing.

"The quantity of seed sown upon an acre differs with the soil, and the views of the farmer. If seed is sown thick upon a very rich soil, the flax will lodge in wet weather. If a great quantity of Flax, or of seed is desired, it is sown thin. American seed being less than the Dutch, requires more ground. Three Winchester bushels are generally sown upon an acre Irish measure.

"Our time of sowing is usually in April. If the land is free, or brought to a fine mould, rolling causes the ground to support the tender stalk better, and prevents lodging. The best flax in the county of Antrim has been produced by sowing and leaving the seed above ground, without harrowing or rolling. The reason given is, that our seed being mostly sown too thick, the weak seed left uncovered perishes, but the strong seed strikes root, thrives, and produces a regular good crop, without under-growth, by this mode of cultivation. Rolling without harrowing is safest and best for flax and clover seed.

"Weeds are the greatest enemies to flax; their vegetation is most easily prevented by spring-fallowing; if any of their roots should escape the action of the plough and the harrow, and of the sun and the air, they should at this time be removed. The seedling weeds should be carefully pulled, and old weeds with large roots cut when the flax is three or four inches high. If this work is long delayed, and the flax much laid by trampling, it may not rise, or it may grow crooked.

"When the flower has fallen, and the farmer examines the crop, he will find, that some parts of the ground have produced long coarse flax, and short coarse flax with many branches, and full of bolls; these varieties he saves for seed. He will likewise find some long and slender, some short and slender, with few branches and bolls; these he will pull when the stalks turn yellow, before the leaves fall, or the bolls turn hard, and will carefully keep each sort separate. If any of it has been lodged by rain or other causes, he can save it by immediate pulling only.

The coarse, which is intended for seed, must stand till the bolls are sharp pointed, the stalks fully ripe, and managed as before-mentioned."

We hope to give in our next Number some extracts from Doctor Stephenson's Observations on Bleaching, and to accompany them with a few remarks, the result of experience. R.

The Speech of Henry Brougham, esq. before the House of Commons, Friday, April 1, 1808, in support of the Petitions from London, Liverpool, and Manchester, against the Orders in Council. Taken in Shorthand by Mr. A. Frazer. London, printed by J. M'Creery, for J. Ridgway, Piccadilly, 1808. p.p. 84.

THE subject of the restrictions on trade, occasioned by the Orders in Council affecting us in this corner of the empire, as well as in other places, in our vital commercial interests, we had designed to bring this subject before our readers at an earlier period, but the copy of this work which had been received, was mislaid, and we were necessitated to wait to receive another copy. It is not yet however too late, for unhappily these impolitic restrictions still remain, and notwithstanding the delusive accounts published by ministers and their adherents, to deceive the public, and catch at a momentary popularity, it is very probable that no relaxation will take place in the American regulations, so as to afford us any substantial relief, until Great Britain relax in her arrogant claims, and rescind her orders in council.

Remote from the immediate scene of commercial politics, we are sometimes, as in the modes of dress, a year behind in the fashion. Last year the orders in council occupied the attention of the British merchants; the merchants of London, Liverpool, and Manchester, petitioned against them, and prayed to be heard by themselves or counsel at the bar of the house of commons; their request was granted, and they were permitted to adduce a mass of important evidence, and their counsel, on summing it up, made the speech which is the subject of review.

While this business was going forward, our merchants remained uninterested and aloof, and because they did not immediately feel its effects, but in the mean time were rather aided by it in their avidity of speculation, they felt no concern in the affair—but speculation is often short-sghted, and it is probable they may yet feel the dire effects of this commercial warfare, of which the British orders form the most effective cause.

Already the people, if not the merchants, have been aroused from this state of apathy by the want of the usual supply of flaxseed, and our commercial interests are affected by the high prices of cotton-wool, and other American produce. Tobacco, that comfort, and from habit, that necessary article to the poor, has become exorbitantly high, and though statesmen and rich capitalists may disregard such sufferings, as beneath their notice, yet thus the sum of human misery is increased.

" And sorrow felt, in cottages confin'd,
" Sighs unregarded to the passing wind."

But if the criterion of a good government was justly estimated, as it ought to be, not by the emoluments to the rulers and their dependents, who participate of the plunder, but by the sum total of happiness to the people at large, different sentiments would prevail, and much relief would be experienced from the burthens of an overstrained taxation being removed, and from all injurious restrictions on trade and commerce being withdrawn, so as to give full scope to industry, and the consequent happiness of the community.

It is our design to give the history of the origin of these famous orders in council, and, in the first place, we present to our readers, the Petition from the Merchants, &c. of London, as giving a comprehensive view of the bad effects arising from the measure complained of:

" *To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, in Parliament assembled, The Petition of the undersigned Merchants, Manufacturers, and others of the City of London, interested in the Trade with the United States of America.*

" HUMBLY SHOWETH,

"THAT your Petitioners contemplate with the greatest anxiety and appre-